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# Disaster News

## **NEW LAW AFFECTS DISASTER ASSISTANCE FOR INDIANA FLOOD VICTIMS**

### *Information Services Available for Applicants with Questions*

**INDIANAPOLIS** – A few hundred Indiana disaster victims may be eligible for additional grant funds as a result of new legislation signed into law by President Bush on Oct. 4, a few days before he declared parts of Indiana a disaster area.

The Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act of 2007 initiates changes to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Individuals and Households Program. Under the new law, the sub-limit of \$5,600 that applied to repair assistance grants was eliminated.

"I'm pleased to announce that approximately five percent of Indiana disaster assistance applicants may be receiving additional grant funds to help with home repairs," Larry Sommers, FEMA federal coordinating officer, said. "These changes will enhance FEMA's capacity to provide appropriate disaster assistance grants to those who suffer losses and damages from floods and other disasters."

FEMA representatives are already contacting the small number of applicants who are affected by the change. These applicants were identified based on FEMA damage inspections that indicated the cost of their repairs exceeded \$5,600.

"One of the effects of the new law will be to strengthen the federal-state partnership in providing financial assistance to disaster victims to help them in the recovery process," said Eric Dietz, Indiana Department of Homeland Security executive director and state coordinating officer.

To date, 4,442 Indiana residents have applied for disaster assistance. More than 3,500 grants totaling \$7 million have been disbursed to eligible applicants, with \$6 million of that total for repair grants.

*-More-*

Information services are still available to applicants who may have questions. FEMA individual assistance and mitigation specialists, along with U.S. Small Business Administration customer service representatives, will continue to be available at the following locations in the affected areas:

**Lake County**

- Lincoln Center, 2450 Lincoln Street, Highland
- Calumet Township Trustee Office, 1900 W. 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Gary

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- National Guard Armory, 2530 173<sup>rd</sup> Street, Hammond

**Vanderburgh County**

- Indiana National Guard Armory, 3300 East Division, Evansville

**Hours:** 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 2 and Friday, Nov. 3

9 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily, beginning Monday, Nov. 6 through Thursday, Nov. 9

Additionally, information about disaster assistance is only a phone call away. Applicants may call the FEMA Helpline at **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)** to ask questions about the status of disaster assistance applications and what type of assistance is available. Those with a speech or hearing impairment may call **TTY 1-800-462-7585**. Phone lines are open 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (local time) seven days a week. Multilingual operators are available to answer calls.

Anyone who may have suffered damages or loss from the severe storms and flooding that occurred Sept. 12 – 14 in Lake, Vanderburgh or Warrick counties should call and apply at **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)** or **TTY 1-800-462-7585**. Online registration is available at [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov).

**The deadline to apply for assistance is Tuesday, Dec. 5.**

Disaster assistance may include grants to help pay for temporary housing, home repairs and other serious disaster-related expenses. Low-interest disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) also will be available to cover residential and business losses not fully compensated by insurance.

FEMA's temporary housing assistance and grants for public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan. However, applicants who receive SBA loan applications must complete and return them to SBA to be eligible for assistance that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.

*FEMA manages federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident, initiates mitigation activities and manages the National Flood Insurance Program. FEMA works closely with state and local emergency managers, law enforcement personnel, firefighters and other first responders. FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003.*

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Editors: For more information on Indiana disaster recovery, visit [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov) or <http://www.in.gov/dhs>.